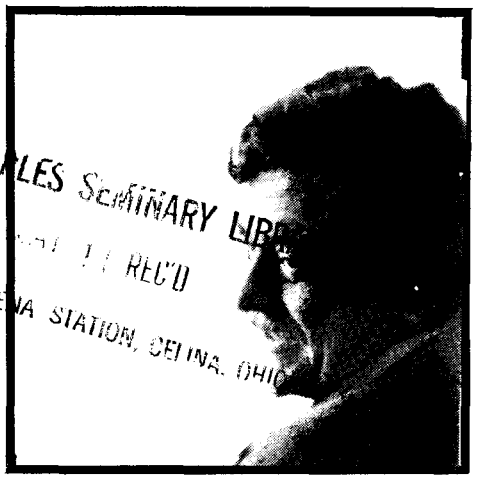
Volume XCIV No. 9 May 7, 1971 40 cents

commonweal

SPRING BOOK ISSUE

ST. CHARLES SEMINARY LIBRARY
REC'D
CARTHAGENA STATION, CELINA, OHIO



MAN, FATE AND KURT VONNEGUT
ERNEST W. RANLY

DAZZLE-DUST: A WOLFE IN CHIC CLOTHING
LINDA KUEHL

MAILER ON THE MOON
TRAVELING'S BETTER WITH PROFESSOR LOGSDON
RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

TO HELL WITH DORIS LESSING
AN 'INNER-SPACE FICTION'
JEFFREY MEYERS

JERZY KOSINSKI: BEING NOWHI
LEADING THE LIFE OF CHANCE
MARTIN TUCKER

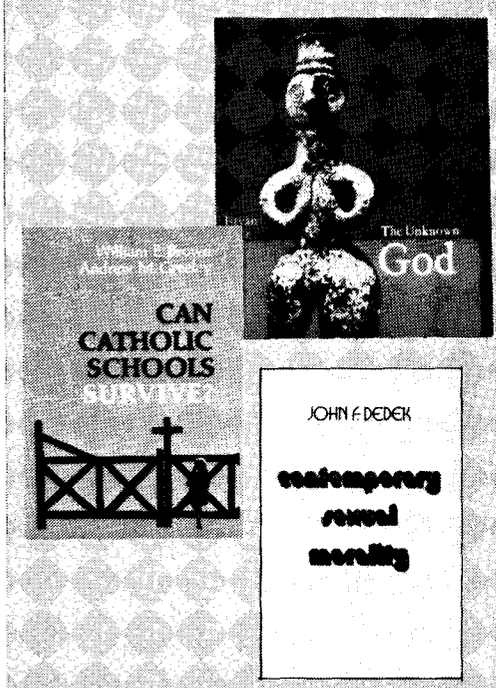
FRIEDRICH HEER & THE JEWS
THE PASSION OF A MAN POSSESSED
ARTHUR A. COHEN

SPAPER
A-6E10 12-71
ST CHARLES SEM LIBRARY
CARTHAGENA STATION
CELINA OH 45822

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SHEED & WARD

In the vanguard of religious thought



THE WAR WITHIN
Violence or Nonviolence in the Black Revolution

Edited by JAMES ROBERT ROSS. The authors of this vital book (nine of them black) maintain that violence in America is a fact of life. The question they debate is whether a violent social order can be changed without still more violence. Among the contributors: William H. Grier, Eldridge Cleaver, Stokely Carmichael, Frantz Fanon, Albert B. Cleage, Jr., Barbara Deming, Reinhold Niebuhr. Cloth, $6.50.
Search paperback, $3.95

THE THEATRE OF PILGRIMAGE

By ERNEST FERLITA. The Chairman of the Drama and Speech Department at Loyola University, New Orleans, himself a practicing playwright, explores eight plays that use the metaphor of journey or pilgrimage to reveal something about man's search for meaning. Among the plays: *King Lear*, Strindberg's *The Road to Damascus*, Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, Ionesco's *Hunger and Thirst*, Ugo Betti's *The Fugitive*, Robert Lowell's *My Kinsman, Major Molineux*. Cloth, $6.00.
Search paperback, $2.95

CONTEMPORARY SEXUAL MORALITY

By JOHN F. DEDEK, Professor of Moral Theology, Saint Mary of the Lake Seminary. A clear, calmly "liberal" approach to every aspect of the questions raised by the revolution in sexual mores. "A very useful report on the direction things can be expected to take. He has reflected honestly and openly, is respectful of tradition without being enslaved by it." — RICHARD A. MCCORMICK, S.J., President, Catholic Theological Society of America, in the Foreword. $5.95

PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY
New Trends in Theory and Practice

By CARLO A. WEBER. An authoritative discussion of psychological trends and a practical guide for all who must deal with such current problems as the "drug cult" and the generation gap. "Brings together much up-to-date information on pastoral psychology. . . . A man himself schooled in theology and in psychology, he highlights the mutual benefit that comes out of dialogue between the two." — ALBERT L. SCHLITZER, *Commonweal*. $6.00

CAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SURVIVE?

By WILLIAM E. BROWN and ANDREW M. GREELEY. In hard-hitting answers to a much-debated question, the authors challenge many assumptions, explode many myths and indict many bishops and educators. "The book makes positive suggestions. . . . For all concerned about Catholic education, this is a thought-provoking book." — *Catholic World*. $6.00

THE UNKNOWN GOD

Photographs by ISTVÁN RÁCZ. Foreword by Walter Nigg. A beautiful book and an authoritative survey of the religious forces that have shaped man over the course of his long history, with special emphasis on African and Oriental religions. The text, both scholarly and readable, is reinforced by 177 superb black-and-white photographs which throw a strong light on how human beings have viewed their gods and themselves. $19.50

At your bookstore, or from

Sheed & Ward
64 University Place
New York, N.Y. 10003

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MEMPHIS
State University Press Memphis, Tennessee 38111

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING
Philosophical Vistas
by Alfred Stern

"Here is a welcome book not only for the philosopher, but the intelligent, perhaps worried reader, who remains confused as to what human existence is all about. The breadth of learning of this former teacher at California Institute of Technology is impressive in itself. His achievement in philosophy, in some measure, is comparable to Viktor E. Frankl's search for meaning . . . He brings fresh interpretation to the latest offerings of such thinkers as Jean Paul Sartre."

William B. Barton, editor of *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*

376 pages, index LC 75-134888 ISBN 0-87870-006-4 $12.50

MEMPHIS' GREATEST DEBATE
A Question of Water
by William W. Sorrels

"Mr. Sorrels makes the story sparkle even as Memphis' artesian water sparkles. His sense of drama and human appeal has not been stifled by pedantic language so often afflicting 'pure scholarship'."

Paul Flowers, *Greenhouse*, "The Commercial Appeal"

156 pages, photographs, index LC 74-130973 ISBN 0-87870-005-6 $5.50

PERSONS, PRIVACY, AND FEELING
Essays in the Philosophy of Mind
edited by
Dwight Van de Vate, Jr.

"The good points of the collection are many: The general topic is of perennial interest . . . These essays do not purport to solve all the problems, but they make their contributions. They are characterized, as is to be expected, by professional philosophical expertise . . . The philosophizing in these essays is excellent."

Michael Stock, *The Thomist*

156 pages, index LC 78-110147 ISBN 0-87870-004-8 $5.00

TAXATION DOLLARS AND SENSE
edited by Festus J. Viser

Three essays: "Taxation and Civilization in the Seventies" by Walter W. Heller, "The Role of Taxation in Meeting Social Problems" by Paul R. McDaniel, "How Can We Kick the Intaxication Habit" by J. S. Seidman.

(No. IV in the M. L. Seidman Town Hall Lecture Series)
96 pages LC 75-151266 ISBN 0-87870-007-2 $3.50

Recently Published

NIGHT RIDERS OF REELFOOT LAKE
by Paul J. Vanderwood

"Vanderwood's scholarly and intensive probe of the Reelfoot incident is a model of historical investigation."

Robert S. Young, *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*

172 pages, maps, bibliography, index, illustrations and photographs
LC 79-91959 ISBN 0-87870-002-1 $6.50

Also Available through Memphis State University Press

THE SOUTHERN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
edited by William B. Barton and Carroll R. Bowman

Two recent issues of *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* have been devoted to scholarly works on the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead and Martin Heidegger. A third special issue was devoted to papers presented at the conference on "The Crisis of Authority."

Issued Quarterly. Subscription rates: $8.00 for institutions, $6.00 for individuals, $4.00 for students, $1.75 for single copies.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEWS & VIEWS

Paranoid Paraguay

The accelerated pressure of the church in Paraguay on the dictatorship of President Alfredo Stroessner [News & Views, 4/9/71] is meeting accelerated counterpressure from the regime.

Stroessner, the dean of Latin American dictators (ruling since 1954), has addressed a "serious warning" to Asuncion Archbishop Ismael Rolon-Silvero, intimating that government action will be forthcoming if Rolon-Silvero maintains his support of activities which "constitute a systematic and progressive process of interference in the exercise of the legal rights of a civil power."

Rolon-Silvero has excommunicated high government officials and repeatedly spoken out against policies of the regime and its flagrant denial of basic rights of the citizenry.

The internal situation is such that almost a third of Paraguay's population of 2 million is said to have fled the country since Stroessner took control.

International public opinion is presently being marshaled in an effort to effect change in Paraguay, particularly out of Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Peru and Venezuela.

In Europe, small but influential groups of writers have been organized to send telegrams to Stroessner at different intervals expressing their indignation over his manhandling of justice. They'd like to see something similar originate here, especially something involving well-known Americans.

It's a worthy idea. Right now what American concern there is stems from a handful of groups, like the Latin American Bureau of the USCC. There's a lot of room for individual involvement.

The Ayes of Texas

From FPS, the high school independent press service, this choice item:

The Texas House of Representatives recently approved —unanimously—a resolution citing Albert de Salvo for his work in the field of population control.

Specifically, the resolution commended de Salvo for unselfishly serving "his country, his state and his community." The resolution continues:

"This compassionate gentleman's dedication and devotion to his work has enabled the weak and lonely throughout the nation to achieve and maintain a new degree of concern for their future. He has been officially recognized by the State of Massachusetts for his noted activities and unconventional techniques involving population control and applied psychology."

Albert de Salvo is the Boston Strangler.

The Texas resolution was sponsored by Representative Tim Moore, who aimed to dramatize the carelessness of the Legislature in passing bills and resolutions, often without reading them or knowing what they say.

Moore withdrew his resolution after it had passed, saying "it might reflect unfavorably upon the dignity of this body. I wouldn't want to do that."

Idealism, 1971-Style

Three years ago, as Dearborn businessman John Hollowell traveled a freeway, his eyes took in a seemingly endless stream of paper and trash along the fences. "I wondered if I could come up with something to clean it up," he recalls.

The "something" turned out to be a machine which the *Times'* Jerry Flint describes as a cross between a golf cart and a baby elephant. It's a low-priced trash, bottle and can collector, which sucks up litter through a trunklike hose.

Flint glorified Hollowell's ingenuity in a piece appearing on the first day of Earth Week, 1971.

Then came the last paragraph.

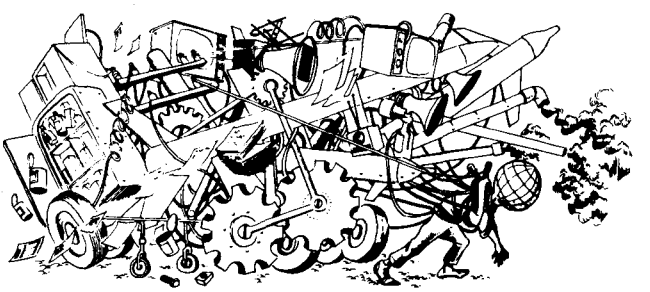
"I'm not trying to save the country," Hollowell told Flint. "I'm just trying to make a buck."

Podhoretz's Prophecy

Holding his record on prophecy to be "pretty good," *Commentary's* Norman Podhoretz crystal-balls the '70s for the *Washington Post's* Thomas Grubisich:

"I'm going to make a prediction. . . . Just as the black assertion set the climate for the '60s, I think you'll find a comparable Catholic, white-ethnic assertion in the '70s. You have 40 million Catholics in the United States. They've never been organized as a political bloc around their resentments. Black assertion demystified political processes. But you can't stop there. You have an enormous potent force here, in this Catholic minority. It could result in the reconstitution of the Democratic Party as a relatively permanent majority. A Democratic Kevin Phillips could work this out . . .

"The lower-middle classes cannot help but push for the redistribution of weatlth—that's one Marxist idea that I think remains valid. There are dangers—the hardhat mentality, know-nothingism. But they could be moderated. This Catholic assertion will set the agenda for the 1970s."



Vadillo, *Siempre*, Mexico

One Man's Familiarity

Dr. Sanford Gottlieb, executive director of SANE, at House Armed Services Committee hearings on H.R. 3818 (a $21.8 billion Department of Defense authorization bill for military research, development and procurement):

"The U.S. has publicly assumed military commitments to 47 countries since 1947, often without defining our vital interests, the nature of the threat to these interests, or the possible consequences of American involvement in these countries . . . A careful reading of the Administration's statements indicates that the American military forces may be used to deal with political agitation, insurgency and guerrilla warfare throughout the world. If this is so, we have learned nothing from Indochina and the Nixon Doctrine is simply a cover for continued American intervention in the internal affairs of other countries."

Odds and Ends

—The new president of Dow Chemical do Brasil is General Golberi do Couto e Silva, former director of SNI (National Information Service). SNI is the Brazilian equivalent of the CIA.

—Concluding thought in columnist George Frazier's bitter *Boston Globe* piece on RMN: "Do you remember the autumns and winters when the playing fields of pro-football seemed populated by blacks named Roosevelt this or Roosevelt that . . .? Will there ever be an autumn when there will be a black Nixon this or a Nixon that?"

JOHN DEEDY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Repudiating Novak

Tempe, Ariz.

To the Editors: At long last Michael Novak seems to be getting away from his amateurish theological driveling and down to his true vocation—hard politics [April 2]. Keep it up, Mr. Novak, but please, don't get scruples and revert. Otherwise you'll be telling us that to vote for Mr. Nixon in '72 is a *mortal sin.*

(REV.) GERALD A. BUCKLEY, O.P.

Annapolis, Md.

To the Editors: In his "Let a Million Voters Bloom" [April 2], Michael Novak informs us that Mr. Nixon must be repudiated in '72.

Since most of his readers of any experience long ago repudiated Nixon and have had to endure him like a hairshirt during the years of his triumph, knowing all along what kind of President he would be, Mr. Novak's conclusion, despite his big-crusade rhetoric, seems less than impressive.

He first tells us in a parenthetical aside that Agnew is "a good man. . . . not a stupid ideologue." This is, indeed, news to many of us. We in Maryland, who denied Nixon Maryland's electoral votes, never thought of Agnew as a stupid man, but, on the contrary, as a dangerous demagogue, who has consistently and persistently striven to undermine our faith in our most dependable media of communication. For many of us (many more million than the one million Novak seems interested in) "Agnew is a good man" are fighting words.

After this accolade for Agnew and a patronizing pat for Muskie and McGovern, he turns his attention to slaying what he seems to consider his opposition. It is interesting to note what this opposition is.

He warns us against getting ideologically bogged down in the Vietnamese quagmire, where the good and

(Continued on page 223)

NEWS & VIEWS: 204 **CORRESPONDENCE: 205**
EDITORIALS: 205
WHAT ARE PEOPLE FOR?: *Ernest W. Ranly* **207**
DAZZLE-DUST: A WOLFE IN CHIC CLOTHING: *Linda Kuehl* **212**
BOOKS: *Reviews by Raymond A. Schroth, Arthur A. Cohen, Jeffrey Meyers, Martin Tucker* **216**
Photos on Cover I, pages 212 and 214: Rollie McKenna

JAMES O'GARA: *Editor* JOHN DEEDY: *Managing Editor*
PETER STEINFELS: *Associate Editor* ANNE ROBERTSON: *Editorial Assistant*
PHILIP T. HARTUNG, COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.: *Movies* JOHN FANDEL: *Poetry*
EDWARD S. SKILLIN: *Publisher* JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*
COMMONWEAL *A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.*
Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.
Printed in the USA and published weekly,
except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and June to mid-September,
by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016
MUrray Hill 3-2042. Copyright © 1971 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.
US and Canada, $12 a year. Foreign $14. Single copies 40¢

THE SYNOD AND THE STUDY

It was a curious contretemps, the unfolding of the Duryea case against the results of the four-year study of priestly life and ministry sponsored by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The coincidence is, of course, without lasting significance. Still it was unfortunate, since the relevations involving the secretly married San Francisco priest with the son named for Pope Paul created a bizarre public context for sober reception of the sociological and psychological study carried out by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). A historic and costly study moved speedily into secondary consciousness, so that what should have been a time for thoughtful ingesting of information became an occasion for humor, or worse, cynicism.

Not that the moment was otherwise propitious for the study to be made public. Pope Paul had not contributed much to a climate of receptivity with his extraordinary Holy Thursday address deploring the "moral mediocrity" of priests who leave the ministry, at the same time linking them, via scriptural citation, to Judas Iscariot. The allusions, coming five days before the priesthood study broke into the news, could only exacerbate conditions which the study would hope to overcome. The Pope's remarks could hardly have been more infelicitous, a fact which Rome may have belatedly realized. It is interesting to note that the weekly English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* covering the events of Holy Week omitted Holy Thursday completely, as though the entire day had been skipped by the calendar.

The study of the American priesthood will outlive Father Duryea, and, hopefully, it will survive papal emotions, as these were revealed Holy Thursday. It is vital to the priesthood not only in this country, but in other parts of the world as well, that it should. For after centuries of feel and grope, church leaders at last have some hard professional data as to what makes some priests weak or strong, happy and unhappy, talented and untalented as individuals and as ministers. It would be foolhardy to undercut one detail of the data without exploring its deepest implications, positive and negative. Too much is at stake, not excepting the ministry itself.

The findings of the NORC study range the breadth of sociology and psychology. In essence the study reveals that a sense of loneliness and difficulties with authority are the two biggest problems which priests face; that more than half of American priests would like to see celibacy an optional requirement of the priesthood (although only 20 percent say they would marry if they could); that Pope Paul's position on birth control does not claim "majority support among the priests"; that the American priesthood is not in a state of collapse, despite the fact that priests have been leaving in steady

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

numbers in recent years; that a "large proportion" of priests are psychologically "underdeveloped" persons often incapable of making full use of freedoms available to them.

As this editorial is written, the American bishops are sitting down at their semi-annual meeting to ponder these findings. Though spokesmen are cautioning against expectation that the bishops will come up with a set of resolutions or statements based on the priesthood study, the study nevertheless occupies a substantial portion of their agenda. In a sense this is expectation enough, since so many of the issues dealt with in the study are beyond the power of an episcopal conference to resolve. What, for instance, can the bishops do about optional celibacy or birth control, given the present authority lines in the church? All they can do is establish positions, which must in turn be ratified, or not, by Rome.

But this is never to be minimized, particularly in a Synod year. Next fall the International Synod of Bishops will be convened in Rome, and its business will be topics which were the focus of the NORC study: the multiple problem of the priesthood. In previous Synods, if representatives of the American church went other than as rubber-stamps of papal preference, it was impossible to tell. But it could be different this year, if the U.S. bishops take their study to heart and mind, and pursue the directions pointed in councils hitherto barren of solid professional data. For once, representatives of a national hierarchy will be equipped with the kind of technical scholarship best needed to arrive at fact and policy. If the bishops do not make the most of this data, it will be not only themselves and their communicants who will be misserved, but also the larger church. The issues are that large and the potential of the NORC study that encompassing.

This week, by the disposition they communicate to one another in Detroit, the bishops make the first fateful determination whether the NORC study is really to amount to something. Total receptiveness to the study is absolutely urgent—especially among the four who will be representing the American church at the fall Synod.

THE HARASSING OF CBS

If in the dark of night the top men at the Columbia Broadcasting System occasionally wish they had never heard of "The Selling of the Pentagon," it would not be too surprising. The network has received some well-deserved kudos for its effort to delineate Pentagon propaganda, but Washington officials from Vice President Agnew on down have been sniping at them ever since.

Most serious of all the challenges to CBS is a subpoena by the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, calling for the submission of any and all material connected with the production of the documentary, from unused film and sound tape recordings to the names and addresses of all persons appearing on the program. In short, the network is asked to supply material with which Washington can second-guess the judgment of the network producers and newsmen. The potentially intimidating effect of such over-the-shoulder work by Big Brother in Washington should be obvious to anyone, and we think CBS is quite right in refusing to comply with the House subpoena. The network promises recourse to the courts, and the issue may very well end in the Supreme Court, which is exactly where it belongs.

This is not to say that television coverage is always fair; it is not. Neither is newspaper coverage, from the *New York Times* down to the smallest country weekly. Nor are magazines exempt; judgment has to be made on what to cover and when, on which article to accept and which to reject, and error or bias is inevitable. All the media deserve criticism, and the problem is not that there is too much but that there is too little, especially along the lines of self-criticism. The point is, though, that as a matter of policy this scrutiny should not be exercised by government officials if we still value our liberty. This is the crux of freedom of the press under the First Amendment. Occasional unfairness is possible, and should not be denied, but under our system of government the American people made a basic decision: we prefer to let men, fallible men, like Eric Sevareid or Walter Cronkite, exercise their judgment and be judged by the public rather than leave the matter to, say, Vice President Agnew or Secretary of Defense Laird.

In this case it is argued that traditional arguments about freedom of the press do not apply to television; since a TV station operates through government franchise, it is claimed, it therefore does not have the protection of the First Amendment. To our mind, this argument is exactly backward. Government approval of TV licenses is true enough, and unavoidable, but this simply means that we should be not less but more careful to prevent governmental interference with the judgment of television newsmen.

Current efforts to intimidate TV producers and writers do not take place in a vacuum; they occur against a backdrop of FBI wiretapping, of governmental sniping at the peace movement, of a constant barrage by the Vice President of the United States against the news media. Said the Freedom of Information Committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in its annual report: "Never has the subpoena been used as viciously, irresponsibly and as often against freedom of the press as it has this year." The public information media are a long way from perfect, and nothing should be allowed to obscure this fact. But there is nothing wrong with the press and television that can be cured by the heavy hand of Washington, either, and this is an even more basic truth.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHAT ARE PEOPLE FOR?

Man, fate and Kurt Vonnegut

ERNEST W. RANLY

IT WAS A VERY good year, 1970, for Kurt Vonnegut Jr. Six novels and a collection of short stories all in paperback reprint editions. A play opened in New York. His readers were no longer only science fiction addicts, the black-humorists of the underground press, or the handful of literati who supported Vonnegut early in his career. In 1970 Vonnegut became known to a range of readers almost as wide as those who read Erich Segal's *Love Story*.

Reading Vonnegut is addictive. His three latest novels *Cat's Cradle* (1963), *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (1965), and *Slaughterhouse Five* (1969) have style, humor and zest so sharp, so clean that the reader takes them in series. There may be a slight hangover: has Vonnegut been too cute, too clever, too pretty? But then the reader painfully remembers the issues, the content of Vonnegut's wild tales (war, peace, cosmic absurdity, technology, man's inhumanity to man) and he realizes that there is more substance to Vonnegut than black humor.

By this time, the reader is hooked on Vonnegut and he begins to spread the disease to his friends, who, in turn, read Vonnegut with the same gay abandonment. When Vonnegut people meet, the first parlor game they play is the personal-biography game. The object of this game is to match historical persons, places and things with real people and events in Vonnegut's life. Billy Pilgrim of *Slaughterhouse Five* is the author; Ilium Works is General Electric, a one-time employer of Vonnegut; Wyandotte College is Cornell University. And so on. The second game is to follow the fictional persons, places and things in Vonnegut's stories through all their various phases. The planet Tralfamadore first appeared in the 1959 science-fiction novel *The Sirens of Titan*. Kilgore Trout, the science fiction writer, appeared in *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (1965). Howard W. Campbell, Jr., the American expatriate who publicly teamed with the Nazi propagandists was the hero (anti-hero) of *Mother Night* (1961). To play this second game well one must read Vonnegut's short stories, where there is first met EPICAC (the universal computer), Ilium Works, the Rumfords, Barnstable Village on Cape Cod and a number of science fiction marvels, many of which recur at most unexpected places in the later novels.

At a more sophisticated level, one begins to speak of Vonnegut's works in terms of style, and, especially, in view of science fiction as a genre. J. Michael Crichton in the *New Republic* has pointed out that Vonnegut long ago extricated himself from the limitations of ordinary science fiction. Vonnegut at times adds fantasy to his stories, whereas pure sci-fi permits only what is possible within a given scientific hypothesis. Vonnegut adds humor, a wild black humor, while most sci-fi is serious to the point of boredom. Vonnegut, generally, adds a distinctive sense and literary class. And, finally, Vonnegut seems pre-occupied with genuine human questions, about war, peace, technology, human happiness. He is even bitterly anti-machine, anti-technology, anti-science. Surely, he is no longer an ordinary science fiction hack.

Willis E. McNelly, writing for *America*, gives a much keener appreciation of science fiction as a contemporary literary form. He compares the form to Eliot's objective correlative which enables us "to face problems we can-

FATHER ERNEST W. RANLY *is an associate professor of philosophy at Saint Joseph's College in Indiana.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not otherwise face directly." McNelly, then, understands that Vonnegut cannot (nor can any human) face directly evils so incomprehensible as the fire-bombing of Dresden. Consequently, Vonnegut employs science fiction as a ploy to give him distance and objectivity (for example, the timeless objectivity of the inhabitants of the planet Tralfamadore) in order to retell the horror. Through the ingenious use of science fiction, Vonnegut is able to gain some kind of human and moral perspective upon the whole human enterprise.

This means, then, that Vonnegut does have something more to say, that some substantial content lies below the form. His black humor is not without a point. Vonnegut's novels are more parables than stories; the name Billy Pilgrim is all too obviously a symbol; the character of Eliot Rosewater is not meant to be realistic. Parables, then, are meant to state something, to teach. And this brings us to the fourth Vonnegut parlor game: trying to understand just what Vonnegut is trying to say.

A number of very serious, but common, issues are immediately obvious. Vonnegut is against war, he is against man's inhumanity to man, he is against a science and a technology and a society which dehumanizes man. Underlying these issues lie two much more basic questions. The first question is: what is man? The second question absorbs the first: is there some grand design of the universe which encompasses man and man's history? Vonnegut is preoccupied with these two major themes, man and fate.

IN VONNEGUT'S early novel *Player Piano* (1962), American society has advanced into the Second Industrial Revolution where machines have not only replaced the *work* of man but also the *thinking* of man. This setting returns in *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* where the fictional science fiction writer Kilgore Trout is credited with the writing of such a book, entitled here in the Hamlet cryptogram: *2BRO2B*. The only people who could get work were people with high I.Q.'s, who were all Ph.D.'s and all engineers. The engineers were able to control efficiently every last detail upon the face of the earth, except people. People got into their way and in the way of the machines.

A revolutionary Luddite group called the Ghost Shirt Society arose to sabotage and destroy all machines. Part of the credo of the Ghost Shirt Society was:

> That there must be virtue in imperfection, for Man is imperfect, and Man is a creation of God.
>
> That there must be virtue in frailty, for Man is frail and Man is a creation of God.
>
> That there must be virtue in inefficiency, for Man is inefficient and Man is a creation of God.
>
> That there must be virtue in brilliance, followed by stupidity, for Man is alternately brilliant and stupid and Man is a creation of God (p. 285-86).

This credo on man may be Vonnegut's. Man is imperfect, frail, inefficient and alternately brilliant and stupid, but, nevertheless, this is what man is, so we must accept him as such. According to the religion of Bokonism in *Cat's Cradle* (as wild a satire against religion as any since *Candide*), the one thing sacred is not the mountain, is not the ocean, is not the sun, is not even God. The one thing sacred is man. That's all. Just man. Man is that lucky mud from among all the mud which can sit up and see what a nice job God has done.

In *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater,* Sylvia, the estranged wife of the eccentric philanthropist, Eliot Rosewater, confessed over the phone:

> "I have behaved badly."
>
> "As long as the behavior was human—" (answered Eliot Rosewater.)
>
> "Can I help being human?"
>
> "No."
>
> "Can anybody?"
>
> "Not that I know of."

This is the same Vonnegut theme. To be human is to behave badly but there is nothing else to do but to be human. When Eliot Rosewater is imposed upon to baptize the twin babies of Mary Moody, he gave only one rule: "God damn it, you've got to be kind."

In the Preface to the collection of short stories entitled *Welcome to the Monkey House*, Vonnegut quoted his scientist-brother, Bernard, who after the birth of his first child, wrote: "Here I am cleaning shit off of practically everything." And when his older sister died, her last words were, "No pain." Vonnegut concluded, "And I realize now that the two main themes of my novels were stated by my siblings: 'Here I am cleaning shit off of practically everything,' and 'No pain.' "

The human lot is not a happy one, so the least we can do is to be kind and relieve the pain. It is because of Vonnegut's lack of pain, lack of moral indignation that many critics say he fails as a traditional satirist. A calm, ironic humor covers the most despicable human behavior. He admits in the Introduction to *Mother Night* that "If I'd been born in Germany, I suppose I would have *been* a Nazi, bopping Jews and gypsies and Poles around, leaving boots sticking out of snowbanks, warming myself with my secretly virtuous inside." All he admits is: "When you're dead, you're dead." So: "make love when you can. It's good for you." Vonnegut's advice to both high school and college graduates of 1970 was that they were too young to reform the world: he told today's youth to have fun first.

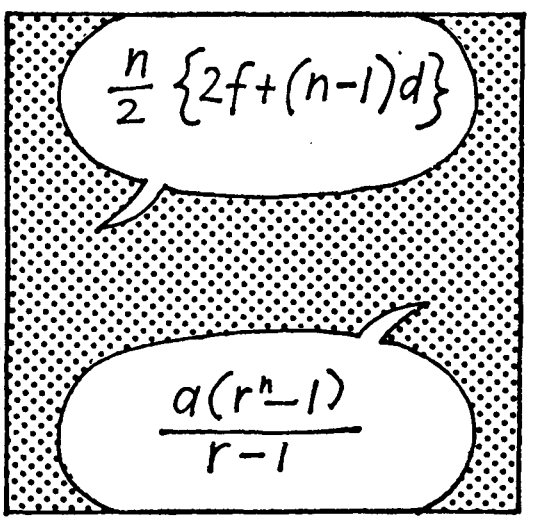
Vonnegut's father once complained that his stories had no villains. Not even the great book about the fire-bombing of Dresden could uncover a villain. But then, Vonnegut has no heroes either. All men are comic, pathetic pieces, juggled about by some inexplicable fate, like puppets.

The novel *Mother Night* had a moral, not a "marvelous moral," but a moral nevertheless: "We are what

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

we pretend to be, so we must be careful about what we pretend to be." Howard W. Campbell, Jr. pretended to be a propagandist for the Nazis on the Berlin radio while, in fact, he was conveying valuable secret information to American agents. Of course, no one *knew* he was an American counter-agent, and consequently, Campbell, along with Adolph Eichmann, was on trial for his life. Campbell had one redeeming moral quality: he always knew when he was lying. Presumably, the men around him, such as Dr. Jones, publisher of *The White Christian Minuteman,* were unaware of the lies they were living. Perhaps this is villainy for Vonnegut: not to admit one's pretensions, especially when they are pretensions of righteousness.

Another villain would be a computerized, technological society because it refuses to allow men the everyday foibles and whimsies of being stupid, inefficient and frail. The Shah of Bratpuhr was on constant tour of the new mechanized American society described in



Magic MacMaster

Player Piano. Every man the Shah met he called *Takaru*—a slave. His hosts insistently explained that they were citizens of the post-technological age, that they were not slaves, but free citizens. The Shah listened politely to the explanations, understood very well the actual meaning of the social situation and continued to call all men *Takarus.*

Towards the end of *Player Piano,* the Shah met face to face the great marvel of the age, EPICAC, the master computer, which singlehandedly controlled all of the Ilium Works. (Vonnegut buffs, playing game #2, recognize that this is the same EPICAC of the short story by that name where the computer falls hopelessly in love with a girl and short-circuits itself into suicide.) The Shah had one question to put to EPICAC. "Would you ask EPICAC what people are for?"

This question bothers Vonnegut: What are people for? He knows man is frail, weak, contradictory. He knows man is *not* to be manipulated by a mechanized world. But what are people for?

In the short story "Welcome to the Monkey House" (1968) the World Government was so concerned about the overpopulation problem that it had set up purple-roofed Ethical Suicide Parlors next door to the orange-roofed Howard Johnson's. People were encouraged to perform their patriotic duty by submitting to painless suicide at the hands of the beautiful hostesses. (One could order a last free meal from the Howard Johnson's next door.) This scene returns in *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* where the situation is ascribed to Kilgore Trout's book *2BRO2B.* The suicide parlors are described as busy places because so many people felt silly and pointless.

> One of the characters asked a death stewardess if he would go to heaven, and she told him that of course he would. He asked if he would see God, and she said, "Certainly, Honey."
>
> And he said, "I sure hope so. I want to ask Him something I never was able to find out down here."
>
> "What's that?" she said, strapping him in.
>
> "What in hell are people *for*?"

From 1952 through 1968 the same question occurs to Vonnegut. What are people for? It is this question of design, of purpose, of ultimate meaning in human life. It is the question of fate, of Providence, of God.

"LIFE IS SURE funny sometimes," observed the hero of *Cat's Cradle.*

"And sometimes it isn't," was the reply.

Woven inextricably into the wild story of this novel is a piece-by-piece exposition of a pseudo-religion called by the Caribbean patois name, Bokonism. (Is religion-fiction a genre distinct from science fiction?) A Bokonist whispers *busy, busy, busy* whenever he thinks how complicated and unpredictable the machinery of life really is. Vonnegut revels in the shallow absurdities of life. If no human villain can be discovered, then Vonnegut seems tempted to say that perhaps God is the villain.

But Vonnegut seldom addresses the question of God directly. Through his style, his humor, and especially through the form of science (and religious) fiction Vonnegut is able to sidestep every direct confrontation with the question of God. The question, however, seems to haunt him at every turn.

If life were only hopelessly and idiotically absurd, then the whole question could be dismissed. But two circumstances will not allow the question to be dismissed. A certain design, a certain pattern is strangely discernible in events. *Cat's Cradle* opens with a discussion about such a plan. And, secondly, man has an inquisitive nature which seeks to know the reasons for things. A Bokonist calypso-psalm sings.

> Tiger got to hunt,
> Bird got to fly,
> Man got to sit and wonder, "Why, why, why?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tiger got to sleep,
Bird got to land,
Man got to tell himself he understand.

Man must convince himself he understands, but he doesn't really. All religions, including the Bokonon religion, are based upon *foma*, lies.

Man is cursed (blessed) to inquire after purpose. In the creation narrative of *The First Book of Bokonon*, after God, in His cosmic loneliness, created man from mud, man blinked and asked politely;

"What is the *purpose* of all this?"

"Everything must have a purpose?" asked God.

"Certainly," said man.

"Then I leave it to you to think of one for all this," said God.

And he went away.

The suggestion here is that the need to see a purpose in things is only a human need which will forever worry man, but that God Himself seems surprised to hear that everything must have a purpose. Certainly things do happen in the way that they happen. This is fate—*zah-mah-ki-bo*—eternal destiny (pp. 125-26). In the final analysis we do what we must. ("We doodley do, what we muddily must, until we bodily bust.")

In the very opening paragraphs of *Cat's Cradle* it is stated: "Somebody or something has compelled me to be certain places at certain times, without fail. . . . According to plan, at each appointed second, at each appointed place this Jonah [the narrator of the novel] was there." According to the Bokonist religion, humanity is organized into teams, teams that do God's Will without ever discovering what they are doing.

Such a situation is exasperating to Vonnegut. But even worse is the pretension of some people, like the Episcopalian lady in Newport, Rhode Island, who claimed to understand God and His Ways of Working perfectly. When the lady was unable to read a blueprint for her doghouse she was told to pass it on to God so that "when God finds a minute" He could explain the blueprint to her. Can man come to an understanding through a study of himself? The title of the *Fourteenth Book of Bokonon* is: "What Can a Thoughtful Man Hope for Mankind on Earth, Given the Experience of the Past Million Years?"

The narrator goes on to say:

It doesn't take long to read *The Fourteenth Book*.
It consists of one word and a period.
This is it:
Nothing.

In *Slaughterhouse Five* Billy Pilgrim, through his contacts with the planet Tralfamadore, becomes unstuck in time so that he possesses not only forward and backward vision, but also a type of non-temporal perspective upon human events. He can see all the stages of man's life in one glance, like seeing an entire mountain range from one vantage point. The pattern of human events becomes visible to such a perspective, but they are hardly more understandable. One sees all the more clearly that every one does what he must do. The firebombing of Dresden occurred but, again, no human villain was flushed out of the bushes.

Vonnegut's novel of 1959 *The Sirens of Titan* is often dismissed as pure science fiction. But this book also contains some persistent Vonnegut themes. (The novel also introduces a number of zany characters who weave in and out of his later works. Even the six-year-old girl Wanda June appears briefly; she later came to fame in Vonnegut's first stage production, "Happy Birthday, Wanda June.") The deceased Mr. Rumfoord (and his space dog Kazak) periodically materializes on earth. Rumfoord possesses the gift of knowing the future for earthlings. His surviving wife was displeased with the future outlined by her materialized-deceased husband. She severely remonstrated with him, that if he *loved* her, he would do something to prevent those awful things. Rumfoord tried to explain by saying that life is like a roller coaster. Knowing what is going to happen wouldn't help any. "Because you'd *still* have to take the roller-coaster ride. I didn't design the roller coaster, I don't own it, and I don't say who rides and who doesn't. I just know what it's shaped like."

Well, who does own it, who designed it? An obvious answer is suggested by the specially created pop religion in the *Sirens of Titan* called the Church of God the Utterly Indifferent. This is the position of the classic Stoicism. A non-feeling, non-loving design unfolds in human events. Grimly, man resigns himself to the ups and downs of his own roller-coaster ride with as little pain as possible.

The Question of Purpose

The old question remains, however, "What in hell are people *for*?" There was an old legend (as recounted in *The Sirens of Titan*) about creatures on Tralfamadore who were not like machines. They were not dependable, efficient, predictable nor durable. (Remember the credo of the White Ghost Shirts in *Player Piano*.) They were obsessed by the idea that everything had to have a purpose. (In short, they were very like human earthlings.) These creatures spent most of their time trying to find out what their purpose was. But every time they discovered a purpose, they invented a machine to serve that purpose and so the creatures were at a loss again to know what their own purpose was. Finally, they asked the machines to tell them what the highest purpose of the creatures themselves would be. And the machines reported in all honesty that the creatures couldn't really be said to have any purpose at all. So they began slaying each other, because the creatures hated above all else those things that had no purpose. And then they invented machines to do the slaying.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"And the machines finished up the job in less time than it takes to say 'Tralfamadore'. "

None of the black absurdity of *Catch 22* is as universal as this. An utterly indifferent God controls a universe in which his prize creature, man, is so built that man thinks he must be able to discover a (non-existent) purpose for himself. Man is condemned to wait for a Godot who will never come. The novel *Cat's Cradle* ends (and the world ends) through a weird freak of science. Bokonon, the founder of his own religion, is willing to be frozen into a statue, lying on his back on the top of the highest mountain and thumbing his nose at You Know Who.

HOW does one make a response to Vonnegut? This is a new game—the fifth Vonnegut game—to criticize the thought of Vonnegut. It is a difficult game, not because the thought of Vonnegut is all that profound, but because his deftness of style and the clever examples are not so easily accessible. Admittedly, the critique here is essentially philosophical.

The primary issue is the very meaning of purpose and design. "What in hell are people for?" Vonnegut is strongly opposed to science and technology, especially when science employs men for mere technological ends. However, in spite of himself (and maybe because of his expertise in science fiction) Vonnegut seems caught up in the intellectual presuppositions of science and does not seem able to extricate himself.

For a mechanistic science, *purpose* means a rigidly controlled design, a natural necessity, an invariable sequence of antecedents and consequents. This whole series of designed events is directed towards some finished product. Thus, the assembly line at the Frigidaire factory is designed to turn out refrigerators. When the question is raised about divine purpose in the universe, a mechanistic point of view will tend to interpret nature as just one big machine, one big assembly line. The natural question then is: for what conceivable purpose? What is being produced from this? It is not difficult for a Vonnegut to spoof all this.

But when men speak of purpose in the universe, is it not possible that *purpose* means something much wider, much more profound than the narrow notion and mechanistic design? Some Chinese thought sees in nature a careful balance of opposites (the Yin and the Yang) where there is present a cosmic compassion. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, God made the universe *good,* but not necessarily functional in a mechanistic sense. The Old Testament psalms praise the beauty of the world and fancifully imagine God creating Leviathan and the monsters of the deep out of pure whimsy. That the universe is made good, with compassion, made beautiful, and in fun, may be wonderfully real reasons for its existence, but unsatisfying reasons for a modern scientist. Finally, the traditional philosophical arguments for the existence of God from design or order in the universe and the arguments from finality are not arguments based upon a narrow mechanistic notion of purpose. One reasons to the need of an intelligent designer by carefully documenting the evidence one discovers of order and finality in the universe, but the meaning of order and finality is not the same as reading a blueprint for a doghouse.

In every case, it is man and man alone (this mud who stands up and thinks) who raises the question of purpose. Is this a cruel trick played upon man by a God who like a cat allows his captive mouse to think it sees a way out? Obviously, there is something very subjective and self-centered about man's preoccupation with purpose. The first thing man wants to save is himself. And, somehow, the rest of the universe is to help him. The Christian tradition is clear that man is the lord of creation, and, though with Adam's curse he must now make his bread in sweat and tears, yet man remains master. The purpose of the universe, in other words, is to serve man.

But what in hell are people for? To answer this question one must forever put aside the restricted mechanistic meanings of purpose. With man, one enters a personal universe where there is consciousness of Self, where there is freedom and where there is a whole new world of values such as love, honor, justice, beauty, joy, happiness. The goals here are no longer those of natural necessity or mechanistic design. The purpose of people is to love, to be happy. Stories about people are histories, not blueprints. In Christianity, God deals with his people in an historical context. Man's story is complex, but not the way the electrical wiring of a computer is complex, but complex in the way lovers are, overwhelmed in trying to understand the intricate and subtle emotions of human love.

It has been said that Vonnegut has neither villains nor heroes. He writes parables rather than stories about real people. Perhaps this, then, lies at the base of his difficulty in trying to understand man and God. Vonnegut employs only a scientific, mechanistic meaning for *purpose* and fails to find a reasonable purpose in either the universe or in man. When Paul Claudel wrote that God writes straight in crooked lines he meant that God was writing a story about people in human history. Vonnegut is correct when he wants man to have the freedom to be undependable, inefficient, unpredictable and nondurable. Vonnegut is correct to rail against science's mechanization of man. Now let Vonnegut tell a human story in which people fall in love and have a nonmechanized history (not even manipulated by the Tralfamadorians).

What in hell are people for? To fall in love, to be happy, to enjoy beauty, to discover joy. Yes, there will be human failings, unfaithfulness, inconsistency, but that, again, is man's story.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DAZZLE-DUST: A WOLFE IN CHIC CLOTHING

LINDA KUEHL

¡Tom! ¡¡Tom Wolfe!! ¡!Tom Wolfe outrageously immaculate in his ice cream suit!¡ ¿Remember? Dapperly he stands, white suede loafer gingerly crossing left, white jacket with *bon vivant* carnation flung over the shoulder. Figure trim. Hair parted perfectly to one side, swept serenely across wide forehead, fluffing behind ears so nice boy long.

But that was the image of '65. While today his straw blonde hair hangs unevenly chopped and defiantly sans sideburns. Few reminders of ye olde fop except the crocheted cravatte in a knotted bulge; two *real* buttonholes per sleeve attesting to continued vice of custom tailoring—"When I get a writer's block, I go out and get a new suit"—and *real* metal on the side of the cufflinks *not* showing. (Tom wouldn't be caught dead wearing Swank gizmoes.)

Yet, despite reminders of yore, how un-NEW he appears today in grey checkered wool suit with conservative vest pulling in vicinity of teeny weeny pot belly. Electric blue spread eagle collar lies stubbornly, wryly, ill-fittingly askew. Blue zigzag socks obtrude violently. And those black leather buckled clods. *Tom McCanns.* Good God, *scuffed* Tom McCanns on the size eleven feet of the outspoken critic of Hush Puppies and cordovans! Tom McCanns?????? *??????????? ???????????? ?????!* Whence the spats, the white suedes, the dreamy creamy vines of '65-6-7-and-8?

Alas, a not all together Tom of Now. But then Tom has given up being brand new and his Untouchables gold watch chain forecasts the shift. "I'm trying to go in the direction of pretentiousness," he told me across the conference table in his publisher's office, his stubby hands gesticulating to the tune of a favorite subject. "It's the only NEW thing left. Like when Nathaniel West went to Paris in the late Twenties. By the time he got there, everybody had already appropriated all the outlandish Bohemian you could possibly wear, so he dressed up like a Bond Street banker and got *invited to all the parties.*"

However, Tom never was the for real Good Humor man his image publicized. The gear was strictly show biz, contrived when *Time* declared him *"wunderkind* of the New Journalism." What does a *wunderkind* do when he is declared—you should pardon the expression—a pop *wunderkind?* He assumes a dandified posture to proliferate his groovy NEW image and personify the pizazz of his free-wheeling prose. Hence Clark Kent in sartorial vanilla.

This facade has stuck ever since though it couldn't be less like the citified transplant whose ruddy, pie-round, wide open face looks puckish warm. His two crooked front teeth might have a weed between them. You could call him Clem. He's so well-mannered and charming, such a soft-spoken native Richmond Virginian. His childhood he remembers as "very pleasant, very *secure.*" The question—was it middle-class?—makes his eyes narrow and wrinkles crease. "I don't know," he hedges, defensively. "You put your finger upon the great taboo subject of American life—not sex but *class and status.* Asking one to rank oneself is extremely embarrassing. You're really ranked by your parents." Towards whom Tom expresses American boy gratitude. Tom Wolfe, Sr., he elevates to agricultural heroism for having once been editor of the farm journal, *Southern Planter,* for having built farmers' coops, and having achieved higher *status . . . . . sta-tus . . . status* than himself. (Embarrassed laugh.) Except for those few comments, Tom is mum on *Mom&Dad& Buddy&Sis.*

Who's Who In America says he graduated from Washington and Lee University, pitched for the ole college baseball team, played two seasons of semi-pro ball before taking a Ph.D. in American Studies at Yale. Then, reporter for the *Springfield Union, Washington Post* and *Herald Tribune;* journalism awards for humor; one-man show of drawings; and ultimately and to date leading man with Clay Felker's *New York Magazine.*

THOMAS KENNERLY WOLFE JUNIOR ARRIVES ON THE SCENE

URBAN SHOCK

APOTHEOSIS IN THE BIG APPLE

He moves uptown to Number Two Beekman Place where his neighbor, Huntington Hartford, gets a weird first impression of him as an Anglified Dali descending into the sewers. Hartford's almost the only one in town who can still recall the Wolfe drawl which imperceptibly converted

LINDA KUEHL *is a New York-based writer and critic.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into slurred New Yorkese rhythms jazzed up with tough guyisms. (Pronunciations like so-*sh*iology and ra-*sh*ism may be leftovers.)

Number Two Beekman ushered in his BP—Beautiful People—phase though Tom insists he never was a viper at society's bosom. No more than 10 of his 140 odd articles can be about New York's socialites. But memory fails him on this score since 10 such pieces appear in *The Kandy* Kolored Tangerine*Flake Streamline Baby,* 5 in *The Pump House Gang,* not to mention book form *Radical Chic* and the numerous uncollected pieces. Still, his protest helps debunk the myth that he's a BP fellow traveler, for really Tom's *statusphere* is not the monkey dinner but the dingy newsroom.

Listen to him reminisce about his Springfield, Mass., apprenticeship as veritable cub reporter when starry-eyed and wet behind the ears he volunteered to work nights, weekends, holidays: "just to be on call, on duty, going places, taking quick rides out to fires, working right up to the deadline because I had literary ambitions." Like it was Chicago *circa* 1920. Heavy *nostalgie de ben hecht.*

Then . . . HAPPINESS EXPLOSION *vis-à-vis* his new-fangled, pop, op, exclamatory, ellipsied, wild-haired metaphorical, over-italicized, super-capitalized, em-dashed, vinyl lined, acetate over*laid* prose that answered WHAMMO the challenge of Sunday supplement writing. "I thought, God damn it, I've got to think of new ways to get people to keep reading, to create an atmosphere right away that would absorb them. I just had to grab them by the lapels—when people wore lapels—and just *hold* them there. I had visions of foldouts with drawings on them but no magazine publisher would ever put those damn foldouts in. So I started developing a style that would capture the spontaneity of thought, not just speech."

Like method acting. "I've never been an actor but I presume you try to psych yourself into someone else's central nervous system and feel the way that person feels. The more you know about the person you're enacting, the better job you're doing." He likens his form to a sort of neo-Dickensian sketch which is widely imitated today, especially by half the kids writing for *The Village Voice.* When someone shows him an imitation he usually finds it "pretty good stuff"—the writer's "gotten out of his inhibitions."

RIGHT ON, Che Tom! You socio-pop pen-wielding pre-McLuhanite Liberator puffing away there on your fat Canary Islands' cigar, spinning dialogue as earnestly and winningly as you please. Tom has a funny habit of outlining thoughts into "a" and "b" except he rarely gets to "b." A *self*-inspired conversationalist, he pulls talk out of his fecund writing bag. For instance, he tells me between grand puffs on his cigar about his campaign against outdated metaphors such as "craggy brows," "that's a tough row to hoe," and "barking up the wrong tree." I sit there taking it all in, thinking, my, what a spontaneous conversationalist he is, until I later discover this same "metaphor" business in a four-year-old article entitled, "How You Can Be As Well-Informed As Tom Wolfe" by Tom Wolfe. Likewise, his spiel on parallels between old-fashioned westerns and the Groovy Movie turns up in "Sissy Bars Will Be Lower This Year," *Esquire,* February 1971. Line for line I know what's coming next. I've heard it before.

So. O.K. Tom doesn't talk about anything much besides his writing bag. He approaches his craft with messianic fervor. Lets nothing interfere. Won't vote. Remains fanatically apolitical. Open to dis-*coooooovery!* Can't even establish "stable ties with other people." I mean, dig his flash-in-the-pan LSD trip, how he started off convinced he was going to have a heart attack or else be choked by some guy in the room; how he felt "right on the raw edge of panic," undoing his shirt, then buttoning it up again and trying to stuff it down his pants, "getting everything tight and secure." *Tight and secure.* Then that incredible consciousness of his heart taking over his body, his "body becoming a heart with little arms like ticks sticking out from it." Away from that body and those messy little ticks. Safer to groove on an *828-foot concrete chimney, floors made of Ruberoid Royal Stoneglow, roofs of laminated glue purlina with a little extruded vinyl finishing here and there, walls of transparent acrylic, floors of magnesite* . . . on anything other than intimacy-so-passé and nineteenth-century oldies-therefore-baddies. Play it close to the belt. *Tight and secure.*

O. K. So. Tom's your *para*-journalist Liberator. He defends his country because it gives him the freedom as a writer he couldn't get anywhere else. He rails impatiently at the literary world which perceives politics as "a battle of angels in antiseptic linen on the plains of heaven." Not this Miltonesque simplism for him, no siree. If the emperor isn't wearing any clothes, he can blast it till kingdom come, a function he finds more valuable than deciding which program the old boy should follow. Screw those manifestos urging writers to take such and such a position. "GET UP OFF YOUR CHAIR. LOOK AT THINGS. DIS-COOOOOOOOOVER!"

Broadcasting the emperor's nakedness often casts him in the role of Character Assassin. Like the time he tried to bump off William Shawn on *The New Yorker's* fortieth anniversary because he was tired of the "timid parodies" coming out that year on an "American cultural institution which everybody knew in their heart of hearts was dead as a doornail." His schtik was conjured up in league with Clay Felker whom some in the profession view as Mephistopheles in editor's guise, thus the Faustian theory of their togetherness. You see, when *New York Mag* was the *Trib's* "brain candy," Tom and Clay *lolly-gagged* around their cubicle—known as *Lollygag Heaven*—kicking around ideas, and one mind boggler was to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

figure out a snow job on their glossy rival. EUREKA! Anti-parody came to someone's mind in the form of mock police gazette. Headline: TINY MUMMIES! THE TRUE STORY OF THE RULER OF 43rd STREET'S LAND OF THE WALKING DEAD! followed by hyperbole after hyperbole linking Shawn's personal idiosyncracies with his ostensibly "dull sheet." Many found this cruel. Joe Alsop charged subversion —Wolfe's a spiritual agent of Ho Chi Minh. Murray Kempton cited Joe McCarthy. E. B. White imputed "journalistic delinquency" and Jerry Salinger vociferated "sub-collegiate." But to TOM the venture "was a lark. No spite, good God. Well . . . frankly . . . an attack, but a good-*hu*mored attack. A laugh and a half. We were having *a good time.*"

CLAP HANDS! CLAP HANDS!
POP ASSASSIN MASSACRES CULTURATI
IN PARK AVE DUPLEXVILLE

GOOD TIME IS HAD BY ALL

Now laugh-and-a-half Tom has the *chutzpah* to take on Leonard Bernstein and an assortment of odd bedfellows lumped together because they either launch or attend parties for Black Panthers, Young Lords and grapeworkers. He dubs their impulse *radical chic,* a variation on his old-hat theme, *nostalgie de la boue,* or hobnobbing with *hoi polloi* primitive exoticism.

Aha! At last! Can you dig it? The invitation arrives at *New York Mag. The* invite to the Bernstein's like the one that didn't come for last week's Lumet Panther party. Clay gives it to Tom. Go to it Tom. Canonize your theory of *nostalgie de la boue* in your own lifetime. On *their* swank turf. At *their* bequest.

Tom goes, right? To see what he wants to see. To write a piece about stat-US. Nothing political. Just details :::tone:::style. That's it: STYLE. Certainly nothing political. Certainly not to attack *all* fund-raising for worthy causes. Just to expose a bunch of socially perverted naive snob hypocrites. Of course, *he* won't count in the piece. *He's* not a key figure. *He's* no Mailer. *He* may admit to being "an urban literary creature," but *he's* no Mailer. So, he'll stay out. Heck, no commitment or involvement. *Tight and secure.* With impunity. Freeeeeee *to* discooooooooover!

So he goes. Introduces himself to Felicia. Says hi to Cheray & Peter & Frank & Donna. Samples a Roquefort cheese morsel and another and another, till almost all are gone. (Nobody else remembers those morsels. It's said they were wolfed up.) Then he sits on a folding chair SMACK in the middle of the room, taking notes with Papermate pen for all who care to see. He notes the Gotham gloaming, the in-vogue South American—not black—servants, funny forced range of attire—a skimpy skirt here, an underplayed black classic dress there—the preppie nasal honks contrasting the super hip, the preposterous incongruity of funky Panthers mixing with *upholstered culturati skulls. . . .*

He filters observations through his ready-made theory, *nostalgie de la boue.* What doesn't fit, he keeps out, like names of friends and fellow journalists, the presence of white organization ladies scattered *liberally* around the room and non-Panther blacks like Roy Wilkins, Jr., Preston Wilcox, Floyd McKissick, Ray Innis. They give the wrong impression. Later he adds names of other BP Panther party givers, *i.e.,* publisher Richard Baron and Random House editor John Simon (the Good), only he doesn't bother to check out that Baron didn't throw a party but offered his Chappaqua home for a CBS taping and that Simon actually hosted a Panther-Reform Democratic function. Not exactly BP. But a fact is a fact is *only* a fact. And Tom remembers his uptight Yale profs forcing him to submit scholarly bibliographies and footnotes. So he rebels. What *if* Barbara Walters doesn't set the right tone in her ski parka? Retailor it, by God, to "a checked pants suit with a great fluffy collar." More in keeping with the *glamorosi éclat.* Style. Liberation. Down with *Anglo-creeping* facts! Down with European-influenced-Eastern-University-dominated KULCHUR! For a real hokey effect, Tom admittedly plagiarizes page 101 of John Gruen's pictorial biography, *The Private World of Leonard Bernstein,* and in a quasi-prologue and epiologue redramatizes Lenny's insomniac vision of a Negro rising out of a concert grand at 3 o'clock in the morning.

Yes, by dad. Tom has enjoyed the flavor of the Bernstein affair so much, he tries to get himself invited a week later to Ellie Guggenheimer's fundraising festivity for the Young Lords. On the phone, Mrs. Guggenheimer tells him, "No press," but answers some questions, such as whether she's having white or black servants. She says two friends of hers—a mixed couple—are helping her serve, though Tom transforms them to all black and describes her apartment as a duplex, which it isn't. Poor Tom Wolfe. Duplex on the brain!

Of course he can't get in to any

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other "radical chic" affairs, (*a*) because none are being given. Charlotte Curtis cooled that with her morning-after Bernstein account which caused such a furor that the *Times* editorially vilified the invitees for, among other symbolic atrocities, besmirching the memory of Martin Luther King. This in turn heaped hate mail upon the guests, whammied their names to the desk of the Prez, threatened many jobs, incited a spate of Letters to the Editor and potshots from all shades of newspaper columnists. The petty burghers had a field day.

Four months later Tom's version came out in *New York Magazine,* then in book form with an account of Andrew Stein's Southampton shindig for the grapeworkers. A Pucci gig, Tom bad mouthed it.

Radical chic. Radical chic. A *cause célèbre.* Tom discusses it with David Frost and Barbara Walters. Susskind can't get him—he'll only appear solo—so David's guests take swipes at an absentee. However few say on camera what they say off. Richard Feigin so incensed by his portrait that he's bleeped repeatedly, later tells me Tom's "a political castrado—no he never even had any balls." Defending the BPs, Wyatt Cooper tags him "a snivelling and sniggling Lee Harvey Oswald who attacks those he most wants to be like." On camera, John Simon (the Bad)—apparently recruited to support Tom— rejoinders with a left-handed compliment: "Tom *V*olfe i*s-s-s-s-s* a *s-s-s-s-s-s*plen*tit* fiction w*r-r-r*ite*rrrrrrrrrr*."

Radical chic. Everybody's saying it, but they've stopped doing it. Yet Cesar Chavez tells Andy Stein, "Give me $50 for a starving grapeworker and I'll be chic any time." Didn't Marx live off his wife's jewels? So what's new? Apolitical Tom has got himself in the midst of a wing-ding poly feud. The ultimate issue: Do you blast out that the emperor's not wearing any clothes or, as in Lenny's case, that he's overdressed, when it kills fund-raising for civil rights causes? The *literati* join the fray as Jason Epstein sounds the final *coup* for the opposition in *The New York Review of Books.* Epstein says Tom resents and envies the rich and talented, is scared silly of the alienated poor, and suffers from a middle-brow hang-up that allies him emotionally with Agnew & Co. Who Tom? Apple-pie - baseball - playing - love - my - father - ranked - by - my - middle - class - family - beholden - to - my - country - tight - and - secure - laugh - and - a - half Thomas Kennerly Wolfe Junior??????????????????????????????

Why, Tom doesn't resent the rich so long as "Mimi Russell of 1 Sutton Place, granddaughter of the Duke of Marlborough," gets busted after Fernanda Wetherill's coming-out ball, or Huntington Hartford has "the most flagrantly unfashionable taste anybody in New York has ever heard of." Nor does he pooh-pooh parvenus if, like Bob Scull—the "Antonino Rocca of Social Climbing"—they retain their ballsy street characteristics

YOU WILL NEVER FORGET THE

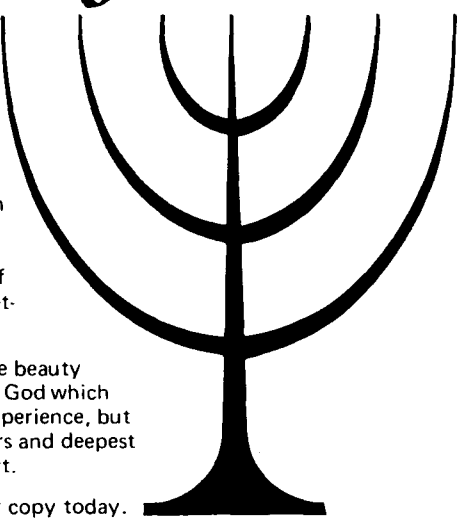
Jewish Jesus

. . . . a hauntingly beautiful and illuminating view of the young Christ as He grows to maturity in the daily practice of his Jewish faith.

Robert Aron, author of the very popular "Jesus of Nazareth: The Hidden Years," has magically mingled his own lyric style with the melodies of the Hebraic prayers to give us an unforgettable glimpse of Christ in the socio-religious setting He knew and loved.

The reader instantly senses the beauty and intensity of these cries to God which mirror not only the Jewish experience, but reflect as well the darkest fears and deepest aspirations of the human heart.

Limited edition – Order your copy today.



ANOTHER ORBIS BOOK

THE JEWISH JESUS by Robert Aron

$4.95 *at your local bookstore, or fill out the coupon below*

ORBIS BOOKS, Maryknoll, New York 10545 5F

Please send me _____ copy(ies) of *The Jewish Jesus* at $4.95 each.

☐ Payment enclosed.* ☐ Bill me.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

**With prepaid orders, kindly enclose state sales tax when applicable, plus $.20 per book to help cover postage and handling.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and have the *moxie* to order "a sport jacket out of traditional riding pink" custom-tailored on Savile Row.

Prejudiced against Panthers? Why, you mothers, notice the man cream over their "tight pants, tight black turtlenecks, leather coats, Cuban shades, Afros," see him go bananas over their natural women "so lean, so lithe." Their *confidential hip* is what gets him, their *supercool and so fine*. If the truth be known, he envies their authenticity, wouldn't mind some of that funky chic rubbing off as he wouldn't mind it rubbing off from the mau-mauing young West Coast aces who deball the bureaucratic municipal yellow-bellied Flak Catchers in Hush Puppies. As Tom confesses, he'd be the last to know. (Could Tom Wolfe be radical chic?)

Well if the Soul Brothers arouse him, he's also zonked by the daring white cracker stock car racer, Junior Johnson, "The Last American Hero," Tom's favorite own piece. Junior "takes the *pure risk* as no other driver has ever taken it." Junior is "raw and hillbilly." *Raw and hillbilly*. Well slap my back and call me pappy if that ain't down right down home hero worship. And ditto for acid head Ken Kesey and his Merry psychedelic Pranksters whose "dazzle-dust," as one reviewer put it, "still lingers in Wolfe's eyes."

But back to Tom's LSD trip. As the afternoon light glistens on the cheap acrylic rug, he has an EPIPHANY: the nubbly twist seems like magic to him and in "the combination of cheapness and vulgarity but shimmering beauty" he "merges with the people of America."

Dazzle-dust *indeed*.

BOOKS

Mailer on the moon; Heer on the Jews; Lessing in hell; Kosinski in New York

The Decision to Go to the Moon

JOHN M. LOGSDON

MIT Press, $10

Of a Fire on the Moon

NORMAN MAILER

Little, Brown, $7.95

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

Three times within three years the American nation has marshalled its resources to send a handful of its citizens to the moon. Somehow, we were told, we all participated in the glory of these exploits—even though we did not participate in the decision that this grand gesture was to be the test and proof of our national manhood. The first moon voyage was seldom seriously challenged in public; it seemed to flow naturally from the American spirit—a continuation of the first voyage of Columbus, a fulfillment of God's promise to the New Israel, an extension of the Turner frontiersman's struggle with the forests and plains and the Wilsonian battle for democracy.

But now space voyages seem to have lost their epic qualities. The ghostly TV images gliding across a grey moonscape newly cluttered with American flags and golf balls have been blended into the land of ambiguous reality peopled by other TV events—like Presidential dialogues, invasions and battlefield deaths. Meanwhile, the darker motives for the moon decision have remained, for the most part, unexamined and undefined; for, given the enormity of the event, if the flight was wrong the guilt may be great indeed.

Perhaps the best journalistic—and generally neglected—critical book on the moon decision is *Journey to Tranquility* (Doubleday) by Hugo Young, Byron Silcock and Peter Dunn of the London *Sunday Times;* but John M. Logsdon's slow and scholarly *The Decision to Go to the Moon: Project Apollo and the National Interest* is, by the grace of his style and the cumulative force of his documentation, stunning in its impact. Logsdon, a political scientist at Catholic University, is interested in the decision-making process itself; and for him the lunar flight becomes a case study in how policy makers have related science and technology to national purposes. He concludes that the "Apollo approach" of setting a dramatic goal for accomplishment within a given time can be used, under certain circumstances, to solve more serious national problems. But the horrifying power of this book comes from its objective portrait of a vain and uncertain new President, who saw all of life as an endless competition, lunging into a project that—seen against the alternative uses of the same human resources—was but one very small step for man and perhaps a step backward for mankind.

Project Apollo, as Logsdon recounts its history, was a political stunt conceived in a series of interacting events and forces: an ambitious Lyndon B. Johnson seeing the Russian sputnik in the formerly friendly Texas sky and realizing that "this country of mine might perhaps not be ahead in everything"; the wheeling and dealing of NASA, senators and contractors; John Kennedy's search for an issue in the 1960 campaign, his insecurity over Laos, his humiliation at the Bay of Pigs, and—above all—the acceptance of adviser Richard Neustadt's thesis that a President's power is dependent on his professional reputation with the political elite and on his public prestige in the country as a whole.

Given this acceptance of the Neu-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stadt theory, it was probably inevitable that the Kennedy Administration would soon sacrifice substance in the pursuit of style. In a discussion with his science adviser, MIT's Jerome Weisner, on alternative responses to the threat of growing Russian prestige, Kennedy made one of the more revealing comments of his career: "Well, it's your fault. If you had a scientific spectacular on this earth that would be more useful—say desalting the ocean—or something that is just as dramatic and convincing as space, then we would do it." Weisner explained to Logsdon, "I think he became convinced that space was the symbol of the 20th century. It was a decision he made cold bloodedly. He thought it was right for the country."

Our "winning" the space race was indeed a symbol—but not merely of the technological power and organized capacity of a nation. To C. P. Snow it signified the closing in of our world, the end of the moral frontier. To Archibald Macleish it was the ultimate affirmation that we were brother riders on the earth small and blue, floating in the eternal silence. To the less poetic and more skeptical it was an indication that we had elevated the philosophy of schoolyard competitive sports to a national policy. When Eisenhower was told that America's financing the space voyage would be like Queen Isabella sending Columbus to the New World he replied that he was "not about to hock his jewels" to send a man to the moon. For once Ike's unimaginative conservatism seems eminently more right than the romantic nationalism, steeled by a Puritan work ethic, of his coldly visionary successor who decided we should go to the moon "because it was hard."

Norman Mailer was justly hesitant to write about Apollo for *Life*. After all, is Hemingway's spiritual son, the celebrator of human conflict as the test of courage in the cosmic war between God and Satan, the proper chronicler of what is essentially a technological feat rather than a human drama? But Mailer had lost his race for mayor of New York, he had lost another American Dream off the Chappaquiddick Bridge, his marriage was deteriorating, and he needed money. So he renamed himself Aquarius and tightened his nerves to enter a land that in his novels had been as alien and ominous to him as the lunar surface itself: Houston, the odorless, colorless Manned Space Center, the faceless palace of America's new royalty, the Technological Wasp. In *The Naked and the Dead* and *Why Are We in Vietnam?*, Texas had given Mailer his most violent and frightening men; in *Of A Fire on the Moon* it was to give him his most impenetrable heroes—astronauts, bland mechanical men, as interchangeable as the parts in the machines that would carry them aloft.

Ill at ease with his material and committed to describing an event he could not possibly experience firsthand, Mailer "interprets" the flight to fit the philosophical scheme of his other books. He expands what might have

BOOKS TO HELP YOU THROUGH THE MAZE

The Mystery and Magic of the Occult
by John Stevens Kerr
Why are so many people seeking the irrational in this age of science? What are the implications for traditional religion? Taking a stance that is both critical and sympathetic, John Kerr introduces the reader to the occult and all its magic. Witchcraft, communication with the dead, palmistry, and Black Masses are some of the mysteries that have intrigued people for centuries. The author maintains that the occult's popularity today reveals a need in man that has been ignored by both science and organized religion. An entertaining book that will enlarge your knowledge of *The Mystery and Magic of the Occult*. 12 illustrations.
$3.50 paper

What the Religious Revolutionaries Are Saying
edited by Elwyn A. Smith
Anyone tired of rhetoric about America's problems will welcome these brief articles by men involved in finding solutions. Writing for the general public, these authors present controversial ideas that stem from their personal observations. They explain why there is ferment and what is at stake for church and society. Some of the authors and subjects:
Arthur Gilbert on the Jewish community
David Gracie on the police problem
Elwyn Smith on religion and tax benefits
Richard Shaull on America and the powerless nations
John Groutt on the communes
and much more. $3.50 paper

Youth Today
by Wayne Saffen
This book probes major aspects of growing up in the U.S. today—consumerism, the educational tunnel, the bomb, politics, sex attitudes, and others. Scientific thinking and organized religion are both taken to task for not meeting the needs of young people. In conclusion, Saffen projects what the church can be and how youth can relate to it and to their culture. $3.50 paper

FORTRESS PRESS
At all bookstores
Fortress Press
Philadelphia, Pa. 19129

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

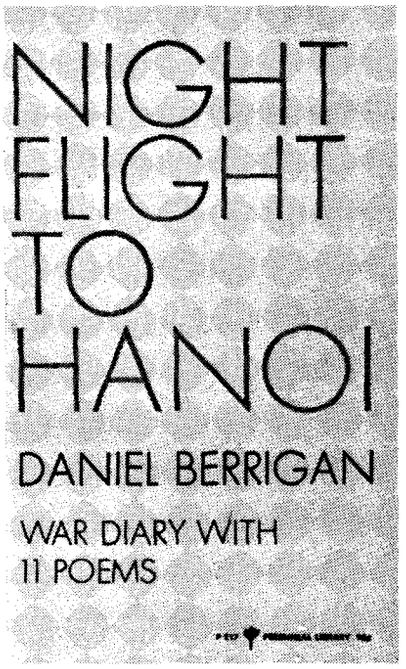
been a fine reflective essay on one aspect of American culture into a 472-page compendium of superfluous technical description, astronaut dialogue, a Whitmanesque catalogue of spaceship parts, cosmic superstition, a disquisition on the "psychology of machines," and political-religious speculation that the real function of the Wasp in history had not been to create Protestantism and the corporation but to fulfill the Christian sense of mission by taking us to the stars.

In his attempt to understand the moon trip in terms of his own eschatology, Mailer correctly perceives that the profoundest implications of Apollo 11 are moral. If God is using man as His agent to reveal His vision of existence across the stars, then God is not love but courage and the fulfillment of His mission takes precedence over the needs of mankind. Otherwise, man is simply sublimating his unmanageable violence in meaningless journeys to dead areas because he has neither the wit nor charity to solve his real problems.

In my judgment Mailer's book fails because he is unwilling to face the implications of this latter conclusion. Mailer the political journalist is sucked in by Mailer the philosopher of technology. He is diverted from his real subject—human motivation and political responsibility—into worrying over what is essentially a secondary issue, the relationship between men and machines. Consequently, the moral meaning of the moon launching for America is more clear to the political scientist Logsdon than to the artist ex-engineer. To imagine that space is the prize to be won in a war between God and the Devil or that the moon is the writer's mistress tells us very little about human freedom and what is happening to America.

The aftermath of the moon landing and the conclusions of Logsdon's book make it clear that the decision to go to the moon was wrong. Seen in the perspective of recent history there is little evidence that these repeated self-indulgent ventures have dramatized the superiority of the American way of life. As our wars expand and our cities rot there is increasing evidence that our moon trips have simply dramatized anew, in a more exorbitant way, those human characteristics that have been central to man since Adam—self-will and pride.

JUST PUBLISHED!



At your bookseller
P/217 • 95¢

Harper & Row
1817 Paperback Dept. 83
49 E. 33d St., N.Y. 10016

"IT TAKES the average family a year to earn $10,000. It takes the Federal Government about 36 seconds to spend $10,000 on paperwork, 15 seconds to spend $10,000 for interest on the national debt, and 3 seconds to spend $10,000 on social welfare. And speaking of the Federal Government, it takes."

For a free copy of NATIONAL REVIEW, write: Dept. E, 150 E. 35 Street, N. Y. 10016.

REVIEWERS

FATHER RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., teaches in the Communications Department at Fordham.

ARTHUR A. COHEN is presently completing a new novel, *The Messiah is Uptown.*

JEFFREY MEYERS is an associate professor of English at Tufts.

MARTIN TUCKER teaches in the English Department at Long Island University.

God's First Love

FRIEDRICH HEER

Translated by Geoffrey Skelton

Weybright & Talley, $15

ARTHUR A. COHEN

Friedrich Heer's polymathy is as comprehensive as a magnet and, only occasionally, as unselective; or rather, since I find his most recent book, *God's First Love,* to be an electrical field in which a thousand lights are charged and another thousand are allowed to sparkle, flicker, and sputter out, it is that his book is too much (than too little) that I think it flawed. His passion and intelligence and his virtually unbelievable erudition(already familiar to American readers of *The Medieval World* and *The Intellectual History of Europe*) are here set to a task of eschatological historiography.

How is it, Heer asks, that the moral and religious potentate of the West for two thousand years, the Christian church—Catholic, Reformed, Orthodox—has incarnated all demonism and sought to expunge its noxiousness in the ongoing slaughter of the Jew. The Jew hangs by his teeth and yet to him is accorded the mythological power to subvert, undermine, dominate and destroy all that is healthy, virile, strong in Western civilization. The Jew is said to have given birth to Masonry, to capitalism, to Communism, even (in the fumigations of a postwar English anti-Semite discussed by Heer) to Hitler's Final Solution, to liberalism, to democracy, to libertinism and sensuality, carnality and materialism. The Jew is the hypostatic devil of Western culture (and I have heard funny talk to my face in recent days of Jewish humanism and Jewish sensualism—ideograms of virtuous knownothings who wield language like a house painter's brush).

The alarming genius of *God's First Love* is that it is not cautious and care-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ful as have been his earlier books; Heer's is the passion and torment of a man possessed. How do you imagine it must be to function as Austrian Catholic of unpleasantly radical persuasion at this moment? Suspected by conservatives, hated by unregenerate Nazis, one-time prisoner of the Soviets, harsh critic of the Catholic hierarchy in his own country and abroad, Heer lives beleaguered. Heer is *vox clamantis* but the desert is his own land. This does not diminish the enormous power of his thesis, but it would have been well-advised to have abbreviated it for its American publication. After Parkes, Poliakov, Lewy, Hilberg, Isaac, Flannery and others, the *other* scandal of Christendom is by now well-known.

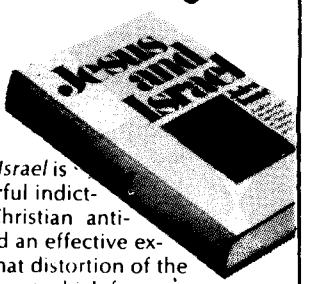
The essential thesis of *God's First Love* is that the pathological hatred of Christianity for the Jew (and Christianity is so vast and complex a reality as to influence even the most articulately un-Christian and palpably anti-Christian movements as National Socialism and Stalin's Communism) stems from the triumph in the church of the dualism of St. Paul and the Manicheanism of St. Augustine. Heer traces, in all its metastases, the consequence of holding that all that which is church (Rome, tradition, infallible word, doctrine, and by secular extension, nation, soil, civilization) is the Kingdom of God and Light and all that which is change (openness, conflict, dissensus in doctrine, ideology, or community) is the Kingdom of darkness and the devil. The Christian West is a prisoner of the past—most graphically illustrated in Heer's discussion of the sad incapsulation of Pius XII. The church still talks of just and unjust wars, still talks of the morality of the lesser evil, still talks of appropriate alignments with Caesar. As long as the Christian church continues to think this way it is no wonder that the familiar, easy, acceptable demonism of the Jew should remain *sub limine* to the consciousness of most Christians (and one has to say *most*, as I would add that *most* Jews remain profoundly suspicious and untrusting of Christians). As long as the world is divided into spheres of compulsive separateness, without penetrability to feeling or the spirit, the world will always go wrong and the Jew will be around (diminished in number, but for that fact even more putatively conspiratorial) to bear the blame and burn.

But more than resting quiet with the paradigmatic presence of the Jew, Heer extends his argument prophetically to the future of the human race. It is here that history becomes a crystal ball and historiography becomes the tool of moral instruction: if the Augustinian split in the vision of man is as profound and habitual as Heer's argument suggests, not alone the Jew, but all mankind will be incinerated. Shade of *thanatos*—that bleak conception of Freud which most psychoanalysts cannot bear to validate (not because they lack clinical evidence of its presence, but because it is a conviction debilitating to the essentially unspeculative moral optimism with which the therapeutic process is invested).

St. Augustine fought off his ancestry and it returned under his episcopal skirts; the young Luther loved the Jews and the old one wanted to kill them; the early Jesuits welcomed *conversos* and a century later they were anathema; medieval Poland succored and protected Jews and modern Poland destroyed them; 19th-century America opened its doors to the Jews and the America of the Hitler era shut them; Pius XII was silent and so were the clergy of America on Hiroshima, and virtually so now.

Where does this lead Heer? Not to a devaluation of the incomparable uniqueness of Hitler's Final Solution (there has been no Wansee Conference on the Negro, the National Liberation Front, or the poor—they all perish from the unconscious calculus of fear, no less the victims of the righteous kingdom of the elect, but not premeditated and planned by the same machinery as killed the Jews of Europe), but to a recognition that the Jew is—forgive the psychoanalytic formulation — an abreaction, a projected repository of the world's ills. Heer's prophetic vision, his sense of our death wish, is that we may not be able to make do with just the Jew. We may need whole cities,

"One of the great milestones on the road to Jewish-Christian understanding."*

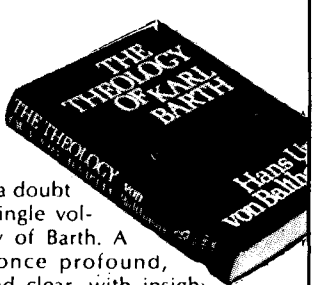


"*Jesus and Israel* is '....a powerful indictment of Christian anti-Judaism and an effective exposure of that distortion of the New Testament which for so many centuries has permitted a tradition of contempt (against Jews) to be drawn from a Gospel of all-embracing love."

—Rev. Edward H. Flannery, Executive Secretary, Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations

JESUS AND ISRAEL
by Jules Isaac
Edited, and with a Foreword by Claire Huchet Bishop
Translated by Sally Gran
$12.50 at all bookstores

"A genuine breakthrough on the ecumenical scene...."*



"Without a doubt the best single volume study of Barth. A work at once profound, critical, and clear, with insight in abundance...."

—Christopher F. Mooney, S.J.

"This book will be useful long after quicker and more cursory treatments of Barth's thought have left the scene."

—Robert McAfee Brown

THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH
by Hans Urs von Balthasar
Translated by John Drury
$8.95 at all bookstores

Holt, Rinehart & Winston HR&W

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books about today and tomorrow

HERE I AM: A JEW IN TODAY'S GERMANY

by IRVING HALPERIN, author of *Messengers from the Dead*. An American Jewish professor who has lectured in Germany writes of his encounter with the postwar Germans. "A book moving for its honest probing of human guilt, and its attempt to make a fair assessment of Germany's mood today."
--*Publishers' Weekly*. $5.00

SCIENCE AND HUMAN VALUES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

edited by RALPH WENDELL BURHOE. Five outstanding scientists and theologians take a long, hard look at the future of man as a human being in the next century.
Cloth $6.95; paper $3.45

Now at your bookstore
THE WESTMINSTER PRESS
Witherspoon Bldg., Phila., Pa. 19107

Get one New Subscriber for COMMONWEAL

For gift subscription write donor's name and address in margin.

------17 Issues for $3 ------

COMMONWEAL
232 Madison Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Please send the next 17 issues to:

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

☐ I prefer a full year for $12.

5-7-71

whole societies, whole civilizations before we are purged and the phoenix allowed to be born. It is that sense of the historical continuum which makes his vision so black and so despairing.

But Friedrich Heer is not without a history of hope. In his untranslated work, *Die Dritte Kraft* (*The Third Power*), he describes the way of tough humanism (humanism not to be confused with the ironic sentimentalities with which this noble teaching is berated by enthusiasts of the right and left) through the confessional shoals of Western civilization. That humanism, grounded in an absolute realism and a theology of compassion, is the one alternative left to us.

At lunch recently Friedrich Heer said to me (and I paraphrase my memory): "I cannot understand why the church thinks God so puny that he must be buttressed and protected by sacred men." I affirm that view. It is the premise of a theology of life and hope.

Briefing For A Descent Into Hell

DORIS LESSING

Knopf, $6.95

JEFFREY MEYERS

Doris Lessing's new novel explores the fascinating connection between genius and madness, between superhuman creative insight, what Plato calls *furor divinus*, and that sublime and terrifying state which threatens the truly intuitive being with tragedies unknown to ordinary mortals. As Rimbaud writes in his daring and defiant credo: "The poet makes himself a visionary through a long, immense and reasoned derangement of all the senses. . . . He arrives at the unknown, and even if, driven insane, he should end by losing his grasp on his visions, he has seen them."

Charles Watkins, a professor of Classics at Cambridge, is the Rimbaudian hero of this "Inner-Space Fiction," which reveals the dreams, fantasies and hallucinations that take place inside his head. The novel describes the trajectory of a mental breakdown, like that of Septimus in *Mrs. Dalloway* or Quentin in *The Sound and the Fury*, and begins as Watkins is admitted to a mental hospital with amnesia and delusions.

He believes that his friends have been rescued by a flying saucer, a white crystal disc, and he is doomed to drift endlessly on the currents of the Atlantic until he reaches a tropical shore. As he climbs toward a high plateau he is greeted by a benign and protective leopard who seems an augury of innocence, but he soon realizes that he has inadvertently drawn evil and death into a guiltless land. He witnesses a bloody human feast that ends in infanticide and cannibalism, and then discovers a horrible semi-human species of Rat-dogs who, like the oppressive pigs in *Animal Farm*, awkwardly attempt to walk on their hind legs. Watkins recognizes an inevitable similarity between himself and these Yahoos who, like man, fight savage wars and have lost their potential for evolving into rational creatures (Swift's *animalis rationis capax*).

The crazed cruelty of this atavistic species is symbolized in a powerful scene where a female in painful parturition is forced to kill her newborn litter while defending herself against the sexual attacks of ferocious males who "attempted to mate with her even as she died in a spasm that was as much a birth- as a death-spasm." After witnessing this atrocity, Watkins believes "there was no hope anywhere for man or for the animals of the earth."

While relating this internal voyage, Watkins is being treated by doctors who unsuccessfully attempt to bring his mind under their control by a series of powerful drugs. They have discovered his identity, located his family and friends, and reconstructed his past, which he still refuses to acknowledge. In an effort to trace his etiology and restore his memory they ask him to record his war experiences, which seem to be the most traumatic events of his life.

At this point, halfway through the novel, as the satellite characters make an epistolary appearance in their correspondence with the doctors, but fail to impinge on Watkins' inner life, the mode suddenly shifts from the fantastic to the realistic, and his conscious

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thoughts begin to take precedence over his unconscious. He then relates the military history of his close friend, Miles Bovey, as if it were his own. (This is only one of several cases of sensitive and imaginative mental transference in the book.)

Watkins' second "descent into hell," a parachute jump behind enemy lines in Yugoslavia to contact Tito's Partisans, has many significant resemblances to his voyage to the tropical island. Travelling with the Slavic girl Konstantina (whom he loves as he never loved his wife or mistress) to get food and medical supplies from a friendly village, he comes upon a beautiful golden deer which recalls the gentle leopard of the island. But the deer suddenly slices its sharp horn into Konstantina's stomach as she jumps protectively in front of Watkins and she dies as he watches helplessly. As he buries her he realizes that the deer has attacked from instinctive fear while giving birth to a doe, and this links it to the female Rat-dog just as the suffering and cruelty of the Yugoslav war are connected to the bloody strife on the island.

Konstantina reappears in the form of Violet, another patient in the mental ward, whom Watkins befriends with the same protective comradeship that characterized the loyalty of the Partisans. Though he wants to live with her, he is not allowed to do so. He reluctantly agrees to shock therapy, his memory is restored, and he returns to his old life among the living dead.

Mrs. Lessing "does not believe that other peoples' crises should be cut short, or blanked out with drugs, or forced sleep, or a pretence that there is no crisis, or that if there is a crisis, it should be concealed or masked or made light of." She feels that certain twilight mental states, what doctors call paranoia, "have a meaning, are reflections from that other [unconscious] part of ourselves which knows things we don't know." Watkins' simple but vital message—that people "are living like zombies and killing each other"—comes from the half-buried knowledge of his damaged brain, and must be communicated to the unattentive world.

This complex and compassionate novel, about dead men who awaken with a surge of intuitive insight and are drugged and shocked back to sleep, is a Blakean attack on the limitations of pure Reason: "He whose face gives no light, shall never become a star."

Being There

JERZY KOSINSKI

Harcourt, Brace, $4.95

MARTIN TUCKER

Like his first two works of fiction, Jerzy Kosinski's third novel traces the adventures of a young man through a mad world—mad in its absurd sanity, its hyper-sanitary approach to the murky ambiguities of character and action. All of Kosinski's work, both fiction and nonfiction, has been this attempt to explore morality, first by a plunge into the exotic grimness of the World War II holocaust, then by a cold observance of the habits of daily American life. Kosinski sees morality (and if he does not see it, he searches for it) as a point of view, a way of observing. In particular Kosinski sees character as the tutorial agency through which everything and everyone is employed in the business of life.

But there has been a change in Kosinski's pattern of journey. In his first novel *The Painted Bird* a Polish Jewish boy was thrown from his comfortable secure urban life into an alien world of gypsies, Nazis, Russians and finally an American hospital haven. The boy's adventures were for survival in this enemy world. Though much of the novel focused on the boy's observation of the strange (perhaps not so strange, Kosinski may be suggesting) behavior of these people, the emphasis was on action—the *act* became character and survival. In his second novel *Steps*, Kosinski's hero became a young man who committed himself to every experience as a step to awareness. The young man in *Steps* was self-contained and in control of his environment; he had grown from the boy of *The Painted Bird*, whose daily chore was coping with the external enemy, into a sleek

The Church as an Inkblot

THE VIEW FROM THE BORDER

A Social Psychological Study of Current Catholicism by John N. Kotre, Project Director, Center for Research on the Utilization of Scientific Knowledge, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

"The first systematic and careful study of the phenomenon of religious apostasy from the psychological viewpoint. I recommend it."—Andrew M. Greeley.

The author has conducted a unique social psychological study that provides some startling answers to the questions Catholics are currently asking about those who abandon the Church, those who remain in it, and those attempting to create a new Church within the Church. A detailed examination of the borderline between membership and ex-membership in the Catholic Church as perceived by young adults raised within the Catholic educational system, the book provides an impressive substantive contribution to the understanding of the modern Catholic Church and of organizational change in general.

Professor Kotre, himself a product of the Catholic educational system, has positioned himself for the study amid the tension and ambiguity that he found at the borderline between those Catholics who consider themselves "in" and those Catholics who consider themselves "out" of the Church. He observed many people staking out new territories within the Church and many others crossing the border and leaving it.

All orders must be prepaid.

268 pp.

$6.95

ALDINE-ATHERTON, INC. 529 S. Wabash Chicago, Ill. 60605

Please send _____ copies of *THE VIEW FROM THE BORDER* at $6.95 each.

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

force of his own, folding the external world into his personal order of awareness and control. Indeed the point of *Steps* was that man could climb a stairway of experience and span an arch of order.

The journey in *Being There* is of a reverse order: the hero starts out safe in a world, a house of his own. He is thrown into a world—New York—through circumstances he cannot control, and at the end of the novel he chooses to leave the real world. It is not clear where he goes, but one fact is obvious: he is no longer *there*. He has opted out, unable or unwilling to cope with his world and its absurdities.

Kosinski's hero is a young handsome man who has no verifiable background. He came of a mother and father (the mother was pretty and stupid, that is all Kosinski tells the reader). He has been living in the New York town house of a wealthy old man, who allows him to tend the garden in back of his luxurious house. The hero cannot read or write; he watches television constantly and forms his notions of life from TV programs. Fate intervenes in the hero's life when the old man dies and the hero is asked to leave the house. Circumstances again shape the hero's life when on his first afternoon outside the house he is hit by an automobile. The woman in the automobile takes the hero to her house, believes he is a remarkable man, and falls in love with him. She tries to seduce him, as does practically everyone else in the novel. Among the people who desire the hero, who pursue him for what they consider his wisdom and charm, are the President of the United States, the chairman of one of the giant Wall Street holding companies, the Secretary-General of the U.N., the Russian ambassador (who assumes the hero is an American spy, and then by a peculiar logic that he is a Marxist agent about to execute a *coup d'état* in Washington), and several bejewelled hostesses and one drunk homosexual. Kosinski's young man is enveloped more and more into a world he has not made the more he tries to ignore it. Indeed the hero does not understand practically anything said to him, but his pursuers regard his wariness and reserve as the ultimate in cool behavior.

Like his other work, *Being There* is a moral tale. The hero's name is Chance, "because he was born by chance." He is a gardener, and the first "outside" person who meets him dubs him Mr. Gardiner. It is easier for the people in Kosinski's novel to give an identity than to find it. The morality—or lack of it—Kosinski is exposing is clear enough: We build fantasies and believe in them joyfully and ferociously because it is less painful than to discover ourselves. The hero's reliance on television is a perfect symbol of our removal from the real. Kosinski thus is going one step further from Oscar Wilde's dictum that nature follows art; here life follows television, which is one more screen thrown between the self and awareness.

What is different in Kosinski's third novel is his great display of humor, wit and gentle satire. Duping the President of the U.S.A., the F.B.I., the Russian secret service, and the clawing minds of the giants of American industry through simple, profound ignorance of conventional modes of behavior is a case in point. Refusing an honorary doctor of laws degree because "I do not need a doctor" is another. The hero does not even know how to deal with sex. When a woman jumps into bed with him, he tries to remember what happened on television in a similar situation. He can't continue in his role because no television program he ever watched showed him what to do. When a man invites him to his bedroom, the hero follows mystified. While the man gropes and fondles him, the hero struggles to think of a helpful TV program. Finally he leaves the man, believing that he is ill. Although he has been physically touched, he has no awareness of any experience he has been through. If he had seen it on television he would have understood.

Kosinski's hero is thus a new nature child. Having lived solely in the jungles

ON NEW CREATION

B. D. Napier

This work examines the age-old problems of violence, arrogance, selfishness, and spiritual corruption in mankind. The author discusses the generation gap, campus unrest, racial conflict, man's social apathy, and establishes a universal need for a "new creation." **$4.95**

Louisiana State University Press
Baton Rouge 70803

For parents . . . for counselors . . . for teenagers tempted to flee the family

RUNAWAYS

A book by Lillian Ambrosino
$6.95, paperback $1.95

BEACON PRESS
25 Beacon St. • Boston, MA 02108

Church / Society

"The Search for God Today"

DR. MARTIN E. MARTY
REV. DR. RAYMOND PANIKKAR
BROTHER DAVID STEINDL-RAST
REV. DR. THEODORE STYLIANOPOULOS

May 25 & 26

Atonement Friars, Garrison, N.Y.
Registration, $10

Write: Ecumenical Institute
Graymoor, Garrison, N.Y. 10524
or Phone: 914-GA4-3209

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of TV, he astounds everyone in New York with his simple, TV-cum-Rousseau remarks. Having no papers of any kind to identify him he is free to be anybody anyone else wants him to be. The hero knows who he is: a simple gardener, but no one else will believe him. Why should they? He has no papers to prove his identity.

Being There is about the absence of being in the modern American world of power, and as a corollary the absence of human beings in that world. In its simple elegance of language and its satiric tone, the novel is constantly entertaining. What lingers after the reading is Kosinski's profound point of pointlessness in American behavior. The novel is in every way but one a worthy successor to Kosinski's previous celebrated work. That one reservation is the ending: the hero leaves New York for a rain-filled garden. But Kosinski never tells the reader where the garden is, or if the hero, like Voltaire's Candide, has the wisdom and power to cultivate his stay there.

Classified

Biblical Institute

● BIBLICAL INSTITUTE, Trinity College, Burlington, Vermont 05401. June 13-18. Ellis, Quinn, Collins, Mowry, Borowitz. Write: DIRECTOR.

African Institute

● SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA Summer Institute. 21 June-16 July, 1971. Designed for Christians, religious and lay, who anticipate working in Africa. Details from Dr. Peter Walshe, African Studies, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556.

Position Open

● CO-ORDINATOR, state college Christian center, live in with two students, salary open. Box 576, New Paltz, N.Y. 12561.

Art

● CARDS DESIGNED BY CORITA KENT and others. Available to shops. Brochure. BOTOLPH, 154 Newbury St., Boston, Mass. 02116.

Assistance Needed

● WOULD YOU HELP a new Benedictine Hermitage Foundation by sending only one dollar to be used for basic plumbing, electrical work, etc. We believe in poverty and simplicity but not debt. All donations will be acknowledged. Thank you and God bless you. BENEDICTINE HERMITAGE FOUNDATION, St. Mary's Priory, 633 Lafayette Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10552.

Classified Rates

Per word (single insertion) 50c
Per word, 3 times 48c
Per word, 7 times 45c
Per word, 13 times 42c

Twelve words minimum.

For box numbers at Commonweal add 50c per insertion.

Classified payable with order, monthly in advance for more than 3 times.

Commonweal
232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 205)

bad guys "keep changing the color of their hats." He patronizes "Noam Chomsky and his friends," advising them that there are also good men in South Vietnam, as though they had never heard of the Vietcong and the NLF. He attacks the hysteria of the left here at home and tells us that "the Movement" is dying and advises "no more demonstrations," and so on. In short, Novak dismisses with a wave of his hand all the most remarkable developments on the left during the past eight years, perhaps during this century. He tries to make us believe that all this has been some kind of left hysteria, an aberration to be recovered from at once.

Now, he argues, it is time to turn to really responsible political behavior and capture the million votes that will defeat Mr. Nixon; for, he informs us, "The importance of the symbols of the presidency must not be underestimated." From which I gather that when ordinary words like "power" are permuted into ineffable words like "symbol" profundities happen. Being rather simple-minded, I had always assumed the Presidency is one of the most powerful offices in the world.

The entire article rests on a fallacious assumption, which in turn, rests on Mr. Novak's very evident emotional prejudice against any kind of dramatic political activism. The assumption is that Nixon won in '68 because of the apathy of the left for the kind of routine, conventional political action that Novak advocates as the only acceptable form for '72. The truth is something quite different. Humphrey suffered defeat because he and the Democratic political bosses tried to ignore the challenge of the young activists under the leadership of Kennedy and McCarthy and insisted on limping along under the deathly banner of LBJ. It is possible, but not likely, that the Democrats will experience an equivalent blunder of leadership in '72. EUGENE H. SLOANE

Change in the Church is nothing new.

A distinguished theologian examines the role of faith, authority and dogma in a changing world and shows that dramatic changes in society always bring far-reaching changes in the Church — and that this phenomenon is both desirable and necessary to faith.

Avery Dulles, S.J.
THE SURVIVAL OF DOGMA
$5.95 at all booksellers
DOUBLEDAY

An Insider's View of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers' Movement

A young Franciscan priest, Mark Day, became the chaplain at Cesar Chavez's headquarters, called "Forty Acres," in 1967. He lived the movement with the people, not only marrying them, baptizing their children, and burying their dead, but walking picket lines, organizing boycotts, and editing their newspaper. His book is not only a remarkable account of his own "conversion," but also the first inside story of these people, their movement, its problems, their unique leader, and its potentially profound effect on our society. 8-page photo insert. $6.95

FORTY ACRES
Introduction by Cesar Chavez
Mark Day
Praeger
111 Fourth Avenue, New York 10003

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CATHOLICISM *in the winds of change*

James Hitchcock
THE DECLINE AND FALL OF RADICAL CATHOLICISM

This is a call to religious radicals to reconsider their fundamental assumptions and to question whether the motives and forces of reform have been valid ones. James Hitchcock, a well-known liberal historian and political journalist, first traces the beginnings of the radical reform movement from the early days of the liturgical movement, and then shows how Catholic progressives have attempted to impose a form of elitism on the Catholic community which bears little resemblance to tradition or to the faith of most believers—and finally even to their own original vision. In the subsequent spiritual crisis many Catholics have lost their ability to encounter God in prayer. The author concludes that, in their lack of concern for the "mystery of the Church," Catholic radicals reveal themselves as not Catholic at all, and in terms of imagination and the possibilities of human existence, not radical at all either. $6.50

Hans Kung, Editor
PAPAL MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

Of the key questions that the ecumenical contributors take up in this book—the first important discussion on the role of the pope in the Church since the Second Vatican Council—is whether the papal ministry can have any significance in today's world. Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican perspectives on this problem are provided, along with a concise summary of the theoretical and practical possibilities of episcopal collegiality in the context of papal primacy. *Concilium 64: Ecumenism*
Paper $2.95

For announcements of other new Herder and Herder books write for a free copy of New Book Review.

Gabriel Moran
DESIGN FOR RELIGION
Toward Ecumenical Education

In this new work by one of the leading and most controversial educators in America today, Gabriel Moran calls for a reassessment of the Church's role in the light of human experience, and suggests a dynamic new framework wherein the Church can become a creative force for humanity. Giving the term "ecumenical education" a daring and original meaning, he first locates the crises and conflicts between liberal and conservative elements within the Church, and then proceeds to examine new developments in both religious and secular education. "This will be the 1971 challenge to religious educators."
—Religion Teacher's Journal.
Clothbound $4.95 Paperback $1.95

Also by Gabriel Moran:

THE NEW COMMUNITY
Religious Life in an Era of Change

"For Brother Moran, the new community means that network of eminently human relationships from which no one is excluded and which reflects emphatically and truly the goodness and ambiguity of human values and aspirations."
—The National Catholic Reporter
Cloth $4.50 Paper $2.45

Hubert Halbfas
THEORY OF CATECHETICS
Language and Experience in Religious Education

A work of major catechetical importance, this wide-ranging systematic study of the entire field of religious education examines such basic concepts as myth, sacred and secular discourse, biblical inerrancy and a thorough treatment of exemplary religious textbooks and children's bibles. This book which carries a foreword by Gabriel Moran promises to provoke considerable debate by both critics and defenders of our present education system. $6.95

At your bookstore or from the publisher

HERDER AND HERDER
232 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

412

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED